

IS THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE CRUMBLING AT LAST?

Generations of True Orthodox Christians, both in the Catacomb Church and in the Russian Church Abroad, have understood that the key to the resurrection of Holy Russia, and therefore to the salvation of millions around the world, lies in the fall of the heretical and apostate Moscow Patriarchate, and its replacement by a truly Orthodox hierarchy that clearly and unambiguously renounces sergianism and ecumenism and all communion with the ecumenist hierarchs of World Orthodoxy. The prophecies of the Valaam elders declare that such a resurrection and radical cleansing of the Russian Church will take place through a True Orthodox Tsar who will be elected by the True Orthodox people at a time of national humiliation. However, as many have rightly warned, such a longed-for event will not take place until the people as a whole – or at any rate, a significant percentage of it – show by their deeds that they have truly repented of sergianism and ecumenism and are ready to receive the true faith of the One True Church.

In this connection, the recent meeting of Pope Francis and Patriarch Cyril in Havana may prove to be a significant turning-point. The meeting – which, as Cyril admitted, was made known beforehand to only five people, – was accompanied by the publication of a communiqué in which the two churches clearly recognized each other as “sister churches” in the spirit of the notorious Balamand agreement of 1994. As if finally waking up to the reality of what has been happening between Rome and Moscow for several decades, many priests, communities and laymen, from Moscow to Belorussia to Moldova are calling Cyril a heretic and refusing to commemorate him in their Divine services. Only a few believe one archimandrite’s theory: that the Pope wants to become Orthodox!¹ The truth is: it is the patriarch who is in spirit a Catholic already...

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Of course, something like this happened once before, after the famous “our prophets – your prophets” speech of Patriarch Alexis II (Agent “Drozdov”) to the New York rabbis in November, 1991. Then many priests stopped commemorating the patriarch for his blasphemous recognition of Judaism. In 1992, the president of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, Sergius Poliakov, declared that the patriarch’s speech to the New York rabbis had been “clearly heretical”. And a representative of the Tver diocese declared that “almost 60% of the diocesan clergy” were refusing to commemorate the patriarch.²

¹ “RPTs: Papa Rimskij khoschet byt’ pravoslavnym”, *Styler*, February 26, 2016, <https://www.rbc.ua/styler/zhizn/rpts-papa-rimskiy-hochet-pravoslavnym-1456494541.html>.

² *Priamoj Put'* (The Straight Path), February, 1992, p. 5; E. Polyakov, “Khronika Tserkovnoj Zhizni v Yanvare-Fevrale 1992 g.” (A Chronicle of Church Life in January-February, 1992) (MS), p. 2.

Unfortunately, only one of those priests actually joined the True Church...³

At that time the MP was able to face down its dissidents. Thus in December, 1994, the patriarchate's participation in the WCC was unequivocally endorsed as having been inspired "primarily by considerations of the good it would do for the Church". Then a purge of the anti-ecumenist brotherhoods began.⁴ The decision was made to permit common prayers with heretics with the blessing of the local bishop!⁵ And with the death in 1995 of the only anti-ecumenist in the hierarchy, Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, the victory of the ecumenists appeared to be sealed.

However, in December, 1995 a group of about fifty Moscow clergy addressed an open letter to the patriarch denouncing the "crypto-catholic" teaching and actions of several modernist priests and laity in the capital. They pointed to numerous instances of the MP offering direct assistance to Latin propaganda, listing ecumenical or purely Catholic radio stations ("Sophia", "Blagovest") and periodicals (*Simvol*, *Istina i Zhizn'*, *Novaia Evropa*, *Russkaia Mysl'*). Active contributors and sometimes even managers of these organs of Latin propaganda included Archpriest Ioann Sviridov (Department of the Religious Education and Catechization of the MP), Igumen Innokenty (Pavlov) (Secretary of the Russian Bible Society), Priest Alexander Borisov (President of the same Society), Igumen Ignaty (Krekshin) (Secretary of the Synodal Commission for the Canonization of Saints of the ROC), Igumen Ioann (Ekonomtsev) (Rector of the Orthodox University of St. John the Theologian), V. Nikitin (chief editor of the official journal of the Department of Religious Education and Catechization *Put' Pravoslavia*), the "priest journalists" G. Chistiakov and V. Lapshin, Priest G. Ziablitsev (employee in the Department of External Church Relations of the MP), who was appointed by his superior, Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyaev), to the commission of the Catholic Church (!) for the canonization of one of their saints. "Such a scandalous fact," wrote the fifty clergy, "i.e. participation in a heterodox enterprise of a canonical character, has not been heard of since the Latins fell away from the Church of Christ in 1054... One is left with the impression that the Vatican is attempting to create within the Church a layer of clergy loyal to the Catholic doctrine who serve the cause of union."⁶

³ *Russkii Pastyr'*, (Russian Pastor), № 30, I-1998, p. 86. Cf. Fr. Timothy Alferov, "Nekotore uroki dvizhenia 'nepominaishchikh' (Some Lessons of the Movement of the Non-Commemorators), *Russkii Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), № 19, II-1994, pp. 102-104.

⁴ A. Soldatov, "Obnovlenie ili obnovenchestvo?" (Renovation or Renovationism?), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 20 (1521), October 15/28, 1994, pp. 6-9; *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), № 194, January, 1995, pp. 7-10 (F); V.N. Osipov, "Pravoslavnoe serdtse na vetru", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2 (1527), January 15/28, 1995, pp. 14-15.

⁵ Perepiolkina, *Ekumenizm: Put' k pogibeli*, p. 205; from the Documents and Reports of the Council published by the MP in 1995, p. 191.

⁶ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

The patriarch deflected this protest by complaining about Catholic proselytism and their use of humanitarian aid as a cover for their missionary work in Russia.⁷ It is not recorded, however, that he rejected the offer of one Catholic organization, "Aid to the Suffering Church", to give every priest in the Russian Church an annual salary of \$1000.⁸ Nor was he particularly disturbed when the Pope was declared an honorary member of the new parish of the MP in Ulyanovsk in gratitude for his sending \$14,000 for the construction of the city's cathedral. Nor when, in 1996, "Aid to the Suffering Church" gave \$750,000 to Radio "Sophia"...⁹ The patriarch's right hand (his criticism of the Catholics) clearly did not know what his left hand (his reception of largesse from them) was doing...

However, the anti-ecumenist unrest of the early 1990s was successfully suppressed by the MP (as similar disturbances were suppressed in other Orthodox countries by the hierarchs of World Orthodoxy). Two important events contributed to this unfortunate outcome. The first was the failure of the mission of the Russian Church Abroad inside Russia. ROCOR under St. Philaret of New York had anathematized ecumenism in 1983, and her anti-sergianism and anti-ecumenism had been very influential among MP clergy who were now for the first time able to read non-Soviet church literature, and learn the truth about the history of twentieth-century Orthodoxy. However, divisions inside ROCOR, and a successful MP campaign slandering ROCOR as an American church under the control of the CIA, arrested the growth of ROCOR parishes in Russia as the country as a whole moved sharply against the West and all things western.

The second event was the rise to power in the year 2000 of KGB Colonel V.V. Putin, who gradually began moving the nation back towards "Orthodox" Sovietism with a Fascist face. The MP's KGB hierarchs willingly joined in this pseudo-resurrection of Holy Rus', especially as it stood to gain financially from it. Thus the new Patriarch Cyril (Agent "Mikhailov") was reported to have made a personal fortune of \$4 billion, gained through the duty-free import of alcohol and tobacco, and to be involved in still more morally dubious ventures.¹⁰ In 2009 he proclaimed the astonishingly blasphemous idea that the anti-theist Red Army's barbarous victory over Nazi Germany in 1945 had somehow expiated the sins of the 1930s, and that Stalin had thereby "trampled on death by death".¹¹ The tepid reaction of Church society to these

⁷ *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), № 204, January, 1996, p. 13

⁸ "Wages for Popes", *30 Days*, № 66, 1994; reprinted in "Vatican Diary", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, January 2/15, 1995, pp. 7-8.

⁹ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 217-219.

¹⁰ V. Moss, "Patriarch Cyril, Abortion, Gays and the Goddess Aphrodite", in *The Battle for the Russian Orthodox Church*, https://www.academia.edu/22378447/THE_BATTLE_FOR_THE_RUSSIAN_ORTHODOX_CHURCH

¹¹ V. Moss, "God 1945 I 'Bogoslovie Pobedy' v Moskovskoj Patriarkhii", https://www.academia.edu/10213748/1945_%D0%93%D0%9E%D0%94_%D0%98_%D0%91

ever more extreme manifestations of the MP's apostasy was discouraging, to say the least.

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However, it looks now as if the MP may have finally overstepped the mark. Putin's invasion of the Ukraine, with its disastrous consequences for relations with the West and for the Russian economy, is eliciting increasing criticism. And Cyril's slavish following of Putin in all things – the price, of course, of his church's large share in Putin's ill-gotten gains – is far from universally admired. Again, many parishes in the "Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate" are deserting to other jurisdictions such as the Kievan Patriarchate, which is recognized by Constantinople but not by Moscow. Cyril calls them "schismatics", and blames uniate propaganda by nationalist "Banderites" – but is thereby placing his sceptical Ukrainian flock in an increasingly difficult position, having to choose between loyalties to the Russian church and to the Ukrainian state.

Undoubtedly concern over the worsening situation in the Ukraine was the main motivation for Cyril's meeting with the Pope in Havana. For his master Putin's sake, he wants the Pope to exert his influence to weaken the West's sanctions regime against Russia. And for his own sake, he wants the Pope to recognize the canonicity of the MP in the Ukraine rather than that of Kievan Patriarchate, which is backed by his chief global competitor, the Patriarch of Constantinople. But for many in the Russian Church these essentially political issues were less important than the issue of *the faith*: that their patriarch had publicly recognized the world's number one heretic. And the patriarch must have known that this would be a problem. For why else would he conceal the meeting from all except five people? He must have sensed that public announcement of the meeting a long time in advance risked eliciting a powerful negative response that might have endangered the meeting taking place – and he was right.

This leads us to think that it will be more difficult, perhaps impossible, for the MP to shrug off the anti-ecumenist reaction in the way it did twenty years ago. Although pro-Catholic ecumenism has been a fact of life in the MP since the time of the notorious Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) - who as well as being the mentor of the present patriarch was simultaneously KGB Agent "Sviatoslav", metropolitan of Leningrad, and a secret Catholic bishop, and died at the feet of Pope John-Paul I, having received communion from him – there is a big difference between metropolitans signing ecumenist agreements with Catholic cardinals and this meeting at the highest level between the Pope

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and the Patriarch – something that has never taken place before in history. The symbolism of the papal-patriarchal meeting is more direct more powerful – and much more dangerous for the internal stability of the MP.

Another difference between 2016 and the early 1990s is that the clergy are more educated now; they have outgrown the ecumenist Paris theologians that were so popular in the early 1990s and are now familiar with stronger, strictly patristic food in the form of the writings of St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, St. Theophan the Recluse and Archbishop Averky of Jordanville. And while the anti-ecumenist ROCOR has been crushed – and, since 2007, absorbed into the MP – the seeds it sowed in the earlier period have sunk into the earth of the MP’s consciousness. Ecumenism is now widely recognized as a heresy; the metropolitan of Vladivostok has even called publicly for the MP’s withdrawal from all ecumenist organizations, including the World Council of Churches, which the present patriarch once famously called “our common home” ...

Paradoxically, Putin’s anti-western policies may have indirectly contributed to the impending unia. For just as Putin may thunder against the West’s moral vices, but has no intention of depriving himself of western pleasures himself, so Cyril may thunder against Banderites and schismatics, but has no intention of foregoing his friendship with the world’s number one heretic. And just as Putin and Russia’s secular elite still send their children to western schools, live in fabulously grand houses in the evil West, deposit their money in London banks, cruise the world in western yachts, buy western football clubs and build villas on the Mediterranean coast of France and Spain, so Cyril and Russia’s ecclesiastical elite drive around in limousines, buy rolex watches, have usually homosexual lovers and engage in extremely profitable and immoral business deals in imitation of their secular rulers. So, far from building up a true spiritual and moral alternative to western civilization, Church and State in Russia are simply showing themselves to be a deeply corrupt extension of that same civilization. Only the Russians are worse than the westerners they ape because their sins are compounded by the vast legacy of the unrepented mega-crimes of the Soviet period, and the terrible guilt and hypocrisy that comes from knowing what Orthodoxy is, and trumpeting their “Orthodoxy” to the skies, while denying it in practice.

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Finally, one may ask: now that the MP is returning to that ecumenism from which it was supposed to have liberated itself as a condition of its union with ROCOR in 2007, will not ROCOR-MP rise up in protest and denounce the treachery of their patriarch? The tragic but predictable answer is: ROCOR-MP are the *last* people who will rebel against the heretic. For having betrayed Christ and His Holy Church in 2007, they are too proud to admit their treachery, but are rather trying to justify themselves by an exaggerated justification of their MP masters.

As an example of this lamentable spiritual condition, let us take a recent article by Fr. Andrew Phillips, a ROCOR-MP priest.¹² Phillips is a very intelligent man who has written excellent things on Orthodox England, and good things on the corruption of the West. But, having consciously taken part in ROCOR's Judas act of 2007, his views on Russia are wildly misguided.

Phillips believes that resistance to the Anti-Christian empire of the West is coming from "what is organically reviving in the place of the old Soviet Empire – the Sacral Christian Empire of Rus". Phillips seems to forget the words of the Lord: "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them." (Matthew 7.16-20).

The fruits of Putin's reign have been unequivocally evil. On every index of social misfunction – suicide, alcoholism, child mortality, drug-taking – Russia comes in the first or second place in the United Nations rankings. This would be impossible if Russia were a truly Orthodox country, a good fruit from a good tree. But in fact Putin has done everything to demonstrate his and his regime's roots in the ultra-evil tree of Soviet power. The same applies to the Soviet church of the Moscow Patriarchate. It has repented of none of its heresies; the moral evil of its hierarchy – especially its homosexuality – is tolerated and its practitioners promoted; True Orthodoxy is persecuted.

Phillips continues with the familiar KGB lies that Russia was invaded *from* Georgia in 2008, and that in 2014 the "legitimate" authority of the Ukraine was overthrown in a western coup. We will not dwell on these myths, since they are not central to our ecclesiastical theme. More relevant are these words of his: "Slandering and even destruction can come in two other ways... The first is by infiltrating the nascent Christian Empire with modernism, which is what individuals have been trying to do in recent years and especially now with the divisive draft documents for the Crete meeting of selected Orthodox bishops next June. The second way is protesting against those unacceptable documents in a divisive and even schismatic way, exactly as Metr Onufry of Kiev and others predicted." It is astonishing that Phillips thinks that modernism in World Orthodoxy comes only from certain "selected Orthodox bishops" who do not include his own patriarch. As if the meeting of the pope and the patriarch were not modernism, and their joint communiqué not "unacceptable" no less than any of the draft documents he mentions.

¹² Phillips, "The Anti-Christian Empire and the Resistance Movement", *Orthodox England*, February 21, 2016, <http://www.events.orthodoxengland.org.uk/the-anti-christian-empire-and-the-resistance-movement>.

Evidently, leaving True Orthodoxy and joining the modernist MP and World Orthodoxy has made Phillips a dyed-in-the-wool ecumenist!

But even Phillips cannot ignore the protests against his patriarch that have begun in his own false church, “with several perhaps hot-headed priests in Moldova no longer commemorating their bishops. Other individuals are following. We suggest that this is an error. Two wrongs do not make a right. However understandable, the far better method of protest is, as we have suggested, for monasteries and parishes simply to petition their diocesan bishops stating that we do not accept the draft documents and that if they are accepted in Crete, we will tear them up, refusing to receive them.”

Phillips suggests that these non-commemorating priests are “hot-headed” and “in error”, and then goes on to assert that “the temptation of non-commemoration is a simplistic error of schismatic proportions”. Logically speaking, he should say the same about all the hierarchs of ROCOR throughout its history, declaring St. Philaret, who left the MP and anathematized the whole of World Orthodoxy to be a hot-headed schismatic, and St. John Maximovich, who bitterly repented of having once commemorated Patriarch Alexis I, to have succumbed to “the temptation of non-commemoration” But these were great men who were capable of repentance and taught it to their right-believing flock. Phillips is a turncoat who is now engaged in whitewashing the Pharisaic KGB agents and ecumenist heretics whom he serves and who are destroying what little is left of Holy Russia. Russia will indeed be resurrected, as the true prophets proclaimed – but only when the people steadfastly block their ears to the false prophets like Phillips who call evil good and good evil, who hypocritically denounce the supposed perverters of Orthodoxy while themselves promoting the neo-Soviet Anti-Christian Empire and its Soviet puppet-church!

February 17 / March 1, 2016.

St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow, who was martyred by the Latins in 1612.